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THOMAS DAY SEYMOUR 1848-1907

Professor Seymour's life is an inspiring example of noble service and high achievement. Its controlling impulse was an ardent desire for knowledge that would not be let by any stress of circumstance. Yet his activity, even in a strenuous generation that effected great changes in education, was remarkably varied. He was not only a learned man who spoke with recognized authority, but also an earnest teacher, a wise adviser in college councils, a writer and editor of distinction, and an able administrator of important interests. He combined in his life exceptional classical scholarship with solid services to the cause of education.

Even in his boyhood he was "a great worker with a passion for accuracy." He graduated from Western Reserve College in 1870 as first scholar and was admitted ad eundem the same year in Yale. He then went to Germany, where he heard G. Curtius, Ritschl, Overbeck, Lange, Voight, and Lipsius in Leipzig, and Weber, Haupt, E. Curtius, Kirchoff, and Steinthal in Berlin. In the spring of 1872 he visited Italy and Greece, and in the autumn began his duties as professor of Greek in Western Reserve. In 1880 he was called to Yale.

His father, a Yale man, had been professor of Greek and Latin in Western Reserve for thirty years. The elder Seymour was an excellent classical scholar of unusual general cultivation, whose interest in the ancient and modern classics was literary rather than linguistic. His intellectual habits and tastes deeply impressed the life of his son, who began in the quiet of his father's library of between two and three thousand carefully selected volumes to acquire that remarkable acquaintance with the Greek and Latin authors for which he was famous. All his life he remained an incessant reader of great books.

Professor Seymour was eminent among classical scholars in America for a quarter of a century. His influence as a scholar steadily widened and strengthened, as he grew older, and enhanced the reputation of Yale University as a great seat of learning. His teaching covered a wide range of authors; his method was Socratic. "It is our duty," he once said, "not to make our pupils comfortable but to prick bubbles." He combined unusual capacity for work with unflagging industry. His sense of obligation was keen and he never spared himself. He rigorously tested the claims of new truth, but this wise caution was not the conservatism of ignorance.

He belonged to the finer and gentler type of scholars, and happily was not "a good fighter," although he never shirked a duty. And thus it was that all men loved him—for his candor, his modesty, his considerateness, his unselfishness, his unswerving devotion to truth.